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THE QUEST: BEING AN APOLOGY  
FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE  
REVIEW CALLED THE KNIGHT  
ERRANT.

*“ ‘ Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble Knight.*

*Such times have been not since the light had led*

*The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.*

*But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved*

*Which was an image of the mighty world ;*

*And I, the last, go forth companionless,*

*And the days darken round me, and the years,*

*Among new men, strange faces, other minds,’*

*And slowly answer’d Arthur from the barge :*

*‘ The old order changeth, yielding place to new,*

*And God fulfils Himself in many ways,*

*Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.’ ”*

“Far other is this battle in the West,” that calls the KNIGHT ERRANT into the field, than the brave fights wherein the Knights of the Round Table fought close and fierce with the Paynim in the name of Christ; other even than that last great fight “among the mountains by the winter sea” when “the goodliest fellowship of famous knights” ceased, and Sir Bedivere went forth alone, and the days darkened round him, and the years. It is no longer to strive against the Paynim in the Holy Land, to contend with ravening dragons, to succour forlorn ladies in distress that he is called to action, but rather to war against the Paynims of realism in art, to assail the dragon of materialism, and the fierce dragon of mammonism, to ride for the succour of forlorn hopes and the restoration of forgotten ideals.

The KNIGHT ERRANT has no title to stand with Sir Bedivere: the old chivalry is dead and never to be restored, while the race of knights is extinct. Yet the cause remains: false ideals, truths oppressed, idealism quite forgot, the realm of the imagination lost, and, therefore, why should he not go forth bravely on his quest, hoping, if it may be granted him, to win some victories over the strange and curious creatures that crawl under shadow of the night, or, if not this, then, at least, to stand for a moment defiant until he falls in the uneven battle.

For the fight is uneven, grant him that. The ancient knights fought man to man, with a world to applaud their victory or lament their defeat. The would-be knight of these barren days may challenge no human opponent, etiquette forbids, rather must he join battle with the world itself, wage war against the very elements leagued in opposition to him in this struggle of men against an epoch.

Men against an epoch; is it not that after all? One by one in this last night, the beautiful things have disappeared, until at last, in a world grown old and ugly, men, forced to find some excuse for the peculiarity of their environment, have discredited even beauty itself, finding it childish, unworthy, and—unscientific: not only beauty in Art, but beauty in thought and motive, beauty in life and death, until the word has become but a memory and a reproach. This is the condition that demands the new chivalry. The fight against Paynims and dragons was the work of a carpet knight compared with this; yet in this fact is there any cause for discouragement? God forbid! But whatever the issue, the Quest lies clear in sight, and he would be craven knight indeed, who would shrink from this new "siege perilous."

Of course it will be said, "he is but an harmless visionary, an unreasoning reactionist, this new Don Quixote." Well, what other course is open to him than, in his quest for beauty, to return in a measure to that time when beauty began to fade from life, not to restore a fictitious and evanescent similitude of things that were, but to learn the underlying principles of that great time, wherewith the times to come must have far closer kinship than with the things that be.

The KNIGHT ERRANT neither claims to be first nor hopes to be foremost in the new Quest; the standard has been raised in England and already many true knights have gone into the fight, some to fall in honour, many contending still, though against heavy odds. The KNIGHT ERRANT follows where they have led, asking only a good fight and an honourable death, whenever that death may come, be it soon or late. This is the Quest. We accept it gladly.

THE EDITORS.